

**MINUTES FOR THE STUDY SESSION
ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, September 6, 2016
Council Chambers
1175 E. Main Street**

Mayor Stromberg called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Civic Center Council Chambers.

Councilor Voisin, Morris, Lemhouse, and Marsh were present. Councilor Rosenthal arrived at 7:20 p.m. Councilor Seffinger was absent.

Mayor Stromberg moved the Public Forum section of the Regular meeting before the Study Session.

PUBLIC FORUM

Ethan Elmore/288 Morton Street/Read a letter from his father who was unable to attend the meeting regarding the ruptured sewage system that flooded his ex-wife's home at 288 Morton Street.

Caroline Shaffer/288 Morton Street/Continued the discussion regarding the sewage system that ruptured and flooded her home, the expenses they had incurred, and other ramifications.

Mark Decker/998 Clear Creek Drive/Spoke regarding noise from trains temporarily running at night due to wild fire risk. The train horns disrupted the sleep of citizens living near train intersections. He urged the City to prohibit the trains from using their horns at low risk intersections and establish quiet zones.

Frank Bertrand/1399 Evergreen Street/Also spoke against train horns at night and urged Council to investigate mitigating train horn noise.

Maureen Wilson-Jarrard/1072 Clear Creek Drive/Further explained how train horns at 4:00 a.m. was jarring and urged Council to consider forming a quiet zone.

Mayor Stromberg asked the City Attorney to contact someone with expertise regarding trains to come and speak to the community.

1. Discussion of modifications to Pioneer Hall winter shelter program

Mayor Stromberg introduced the topic. Heidi Parker coordinated winter shelter nights and explained there were now four nights of shelter offered through the faith community and a collaborative effort with the City. The Presbyterian Church hosted Monday night shelter, Tuesday and Thursday shelter nights were provided through a partnership with the City, Temple Emek Shalom, and the Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (RVUUF), and Wednesday nights at the Trinity Episcopal Church. Volunteers received training annually and this year included mental health and behavioral strategies. Currently there were over 140 volunteers. In addition to regular scheduled shelter nights, the City provided emergency shelter nights when temperatures dropped to 20 degrees or colder. All shelter hosts undergo background checks.

Other volunteers present included John Wieczorek from RVUUF and Sharon Harris from Temple Emek Shalom who participated in the Tuesday and Thursday night shelter program, Karen Amarotico who coordinated the Presbyterian shelter on Mondays and Allan Miles from Trinity Episcopal Church who provided Wednesday shelter nights.

Councilor Rosenthal arrived at 7:20 p.m.

Organizers for the Pioneer Hall shelter nights wanted to increase the capacity restriction from 30 to 42, an occupant load permitted by the fire code. Shelters averaged 29 to 30 guests per night. Emergency shelter nights typically housed 40 to 50 guests. Due to increased numbers on colder nights, Ms. Parker suggested using The Grove. City Administrator Dave Kanner did not think increasing capacity at Pioneer Hall would affect space or the number of volunteers. Shelter guests suggested having shelter seven nights a week instead of four, and increasing the emergency shelter weather temperature.

Mr. Kanner explained the request for rubber gloves, trash bags, and cleaning supplies was a minimal cost to the City. Parks and Recreation Director Michael Black added the Parks Department could stock Pioneer Hall with the items requested.

Council was not comfortable eliminating the requirement to have one male and one female host for risk management issues. The City had to consider potential liability as well as an operational standards view regarding female guests uncomfortable staying at a shelter without a female volunteer. Volunteer staff responded it was not always possible to have one man and one woman volunteer. Mr. Kanner noted having one male and one female volunteer present as well as the host to guest ratio were recommendations made by CIS, the City's insurance company in 2012. From a risk management standpoint the City typically took a conservative view.

Council directed staff to bring back a modification to the language that provided an exception to having one male and one female volunteer for Pioneer Hall shelter nights.

Council and the volunteer staff discussed the need for covering the floor with plastic for potential dog accidents. Volunteer staff used a bleach solution and cleaned dog messes promptly when they occurred which was infrequent. Mr. Black commented the plastic also protected the floors from dog nails. The process could be reviewed and possibly use kennels instead. Volunteers explained messes occurred rarely and often guests had plastic or beds for their dogs. Guests did not want to sleep separate from their dogs so kennels would not work. Alternately, transporting kennels created a burden for volunteer staff. Mr. Black would make a decision after looking into the operation further. Volunteer staff had never encountered a dogfight in a shelter. If that happened, the guests would have to remove their dogs. Shelter guests sign a statement that they understand the shelter rules and sign a liability waiver.

Mr. Black would look into having professional cleaning occur the mornings after shelter nights at Pioneer Hall providing volunteer staff assisted.

Councilor Voisin suggested staff look into the possibility of increasing shelter nights one or two nights during the winter at Pioneer Hall. Mayor Stromberg added her request to the future discussion regarding emergency shelter nights.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Christensen
City Recorder